

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 986
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 5264

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, GR
SUBJ: STATEMENT BY RETIRED OFFICERS CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT

1. TWO RIGHT WING ATHENIAN DAILIES, ELEFTHEROS COSMOS AND ESTIA,
ON JUNE 5-6 CARRY A LENGTHY STATEMENT SIGNED BY 179 RETIRED MILITARY
(MOSTLY ARMY) AND POLICE OFFICERS ENTITLED "A CRY OF AGONY." THE
"CRY" IS A REHASH OF THE VIEWS AND SENTIMENTS OF THE EXTREME RIGHT
CRITICS OF THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT AND MAKES NO CLEAR STATEMENT
OF PURPOSE. RATHER THE DECLARATION:

--STATES THAT GREECE IS AT THE CURRENT MOMENT FACING A "DEADLY
DANGER" FROM AN AGGRESSIVE TURKEY;

--BUT FACED WITH THAT DANGER THE STRENGTH OF THE MILITARY IS BEING
"CORRUPTED" BY THE "DISINTEGRATION" OF GREECE'S TIES TO NATO,
BY ANTI-NATO AND ANTI-AMERICAN "HYSTERIA."

--THAT AT THE SAME TIME "THE CREATORS OF MODERN GREECE" ARE BEING
"DEFAMED" AND ATTACKED BY "EVEN OFFICIAL LIPS."

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--THE SLOGANS OF "INTERNATIONALISM" AND "ANARCHY" (IN THE LEXICON OF
THE FAR RIGHT THESE ARE SYNONYMS FOR COMMUNISM) ARE BEING
UNLEASHED ON A SUSCEPTIBLE YOUTH TO THE POINT THAT YOUNG MEN NO
LONGER WANT TO SERVE THEIR NATION IN THE MILITARY AND INSTEAD
SEEK TO AVOID SERVICE.

AFTER PAINTING SUCH A BLEAK PICTURE OF WHAT IS ALLEGEDLY HAPPENING IN GREECE, THE SIGNERS CALL FOR ALL GREEKS TO CONSIDER "THIS APPEAL AS A CRY OF AGONY OR AN AWAKENING BUGLE CALL...AND TO PERFORM THEIR DUTY."

2. COMMENT: THE ESSENCE OF THIS STATEMENT APPEARS TO BE THE NOW FAMILIAR ULTRA-RIGHTIST CHARGE THAT CARAMANLIS IS SELLING THE COUNTRY OUT TO THE LEFT AND TO THE TURKS. EXACTLY WHAT THE SIGNERS SEE AS THE DUTY OF THOSE WHO ANSWER THEIR CLARION IS AT THIS POINT UNCLEAR, AS IS THEIR REASON FOR CHOOSING THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT TO SOUND IT.

3. THE LIST OF SIGNERS IS MIXED. IT INCLUDES SOME PROMINENT FORMER SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS, A FEW RETIRED AIR FORCE GENERALS AND SOME FORMER SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS. A HANDFUL OF FORMER OFFICERS IDENTIFIED WITH THE JUNTA IS ALSO ON THE LIST. FOR THE MOST PART, HOWEVER, THE SIGNERS ARE RELATIVELY UNKNOWN. WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT PERHAPS ARE THOSE WHO DID NOT SIGN THE STATEMENT--THERE IS A LARGE NUMBER OF FORMERLY PROMINENT AND INFLUENTIAL RETIRED SENIOR OFFICERS WHOSE NAMES DO NOT APPEAR ON THE LIST WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO SIGN. (THE ORGANIZERS OF THE STATEMENT STATE IN A FOOTNOTE AT THE BOTTOM THAT THEY GATHERED THE NAMES IN SUCH A HURRY THAT THEY COULD NOT TOUCH BASE WITH EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTS THE IDEAS IT CONTAINS.)

4. THE ONLY TWO PAPERS TO CARRY THE FULL TEXT OF THE STATEMENT ARE THOSE NORMALLY READ BY MILITARY OFFICERS. OTHER NEWSPAPERS CHOSE TO PRINT ONLY SUMMARIES OR EXCERPTS OF THE STATEMENT AND ONE (MOSCOW-ORIENTED COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAN RIZOSPASTIS) HAS SO FAR

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IGNORED IT. PAPERS OF THE LEFT HAVE CRITICIZED THE STATEMENT AS A "FASCIST PROVOCATION." ONE CONSERVATIVE DAILY AGREED WITH SOME POINTS OF THE STATEMENT BUT SAID QUESTIONS SUCH AS RELATIONS WITH NATO SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE GOVERNMENT TO HANDLE. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, "GOVERNMENT CIRCLES" DO NOT ATTACH PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE STATEMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE ABOUT IT.
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